

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 21 have been amended. Specifically, claim 2 has been canceled and its subject matter incorporated in claim 1. Similarly, claim 24 has been canceled and its subject matter incorporated into claim 21. Claims 26 – 28 have been canceled. In light of the above amendments, claims 1, 3 – 5, 7 – 15, 17 – 23, and 25 are currently pending in the subject application.

In the Office action mailed June 19, 2006, claim 26 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph; claims 1, 21 – 23, and 25 – 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b); and claims 3, 7, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). In addition, claims 11 – 15 and 17 – 20 were *allowed*, while claims 2, 4, 5, 8, and 24 were *objected to* as being dependent on a rejected claim, but were indicated to be allowable if written in independent form. Favorable reconsideration of the subject application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The final Office action objected to claims 2 and 24. As explained above, the subject matter of claim 2 has been incorporated into independent claim 1 and the subject matter of claim 24 has been incorporated into independent claim 21. Thus, claims 2 and 24 have effectively been rewritten in independent form, and include all the limitations of their respective base claims. In addition, claims 26 – 28 have been canceled, thus the rejections applied to these claims are considered moot.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner find the application to be in condition for allowance with regard to claims 1, 3 – 5, 7 – 15, 17 – 23, and

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25. However, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, she is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned to discuss any unresolved issues and to further expedite the disposition of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

/Howard R. Richman/

Howard R. Richman
Registration No. 41,451

EDELL, SHAPIRO & FINNAN, LLC
1901 Research Boulevard, Suite 400
Rockville, Maryland 20850-3164
(301) 424-3640

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